

New Arrivals and Transition Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 With the 2009 Policy Framework the university formed a central steering group to identify ways in which to improve the transition to university for all students. From this process a New Arrivals group was convened and, following consultation, the 'New Students' entitlement' was devised and implemented.

2. Purpose and Scope

2.1 The central aim of the policy is development and delivery of a holistic, integrated and extended approach to transition.

2.2 The statement of students' entitlement is now central to the university's New Arrivals and Transition policy and is the foundation for students at the start of their programme as the outcome to which the university is committed for all new students on arrival. (Appendix B)

2.3 Entitlement for new students is to be embedded in the contexts of:

- the student journey as a continuous process which takes the student from acceptance through to the end of their first year
- Institutional responsibility to work collaboratively towards high quality provision

This should include welcome, engagement, information, orientation, socialisation, support and administration.

3. Guiding principles

The guiding principles underlying the students' entitlement prior to, during and after their first week are:

- 3.1 an understanding of transition as a holistic process beginning with application and continuing throughout the first year
- 3.2 an understanding of new students' high expectations, needs and anxieties and our responsibilities to demonstrate understanding of these, to harness students' active enthusiasm and to provide appropriate resources and support mechanisms
- 3.3 that the new student's primary home is in their programme and School within the context of shared responsibility and collaboration between all Schools and Offices
- 3.4 that communications with new students from Acceptance onwards must be timely, clear, co-ordinated and effective.
- 3.5 the need for all (including 'non-standard' and international) students to be included and catered for
- 3.6 the need for an integrated process combining academic, practical, and social aspects, promoting a sense of identity as University of Greenwich students and potential graduates
- 3.7 continued dialogue and partnership with students to understand and evaluate their experience and to continue improvements in our provision
- 3.8 the importance of monitoring and biannual reporting as a process of reflection and forward planning, which enables sharing and continual development of effective practice.

4. Institutional objectives

- 4.1 to ensure forward planning so that systems, services and School provision are fit for purpose and in place, allowing for staff briefings and training in good time
- 4.2 to improve cross-institutional communication and collaboration, shared understanding and responsibility for and ownership of processes
- 4.3 to identify the needs of particular cohorts and to ensure parity of offer, including: part-time students, direct entrants, international students, mature students, students with disabilities, distance learners, fail/repeat students, combined studies students, late arrivals, early starters and students on associate programmes, post-graduate students
- 4.4 to ensure that university-wide principles and entitlement are delivered appropriately, depending on local contexts and variations in programmes, Schools, campuses
- 4.5 to maximise resources to ensure that enhancements are sustained, including sharing activities and procurement cross-school and cross-campus where possible and appropriate
- 4.6 to increase the use of online resources and activities through the process of application and acceptance into arrival and ongoing academic and other support through the year, ensuring easy access to information; for both students and staff
- 4.7 to formulate action plans based on evaluation processes and consultation with students
- 4.8 to ensure clear timely communication with students from Acceptance onwards, including information on their entitlement and responsibilities, and specifying a limit within which the student should be fully registered and/or final end dates for registration

5. Implementation

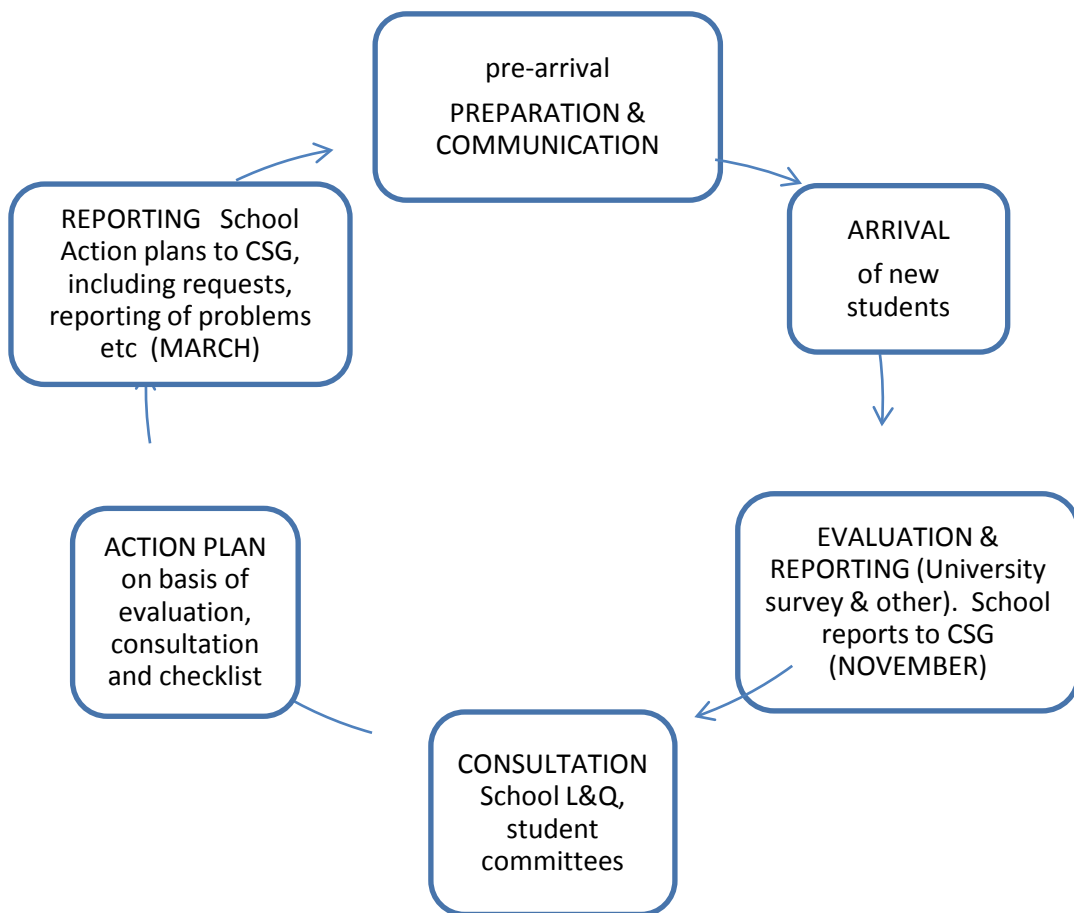
- 5.1 Appendix A provides details of roles and responsibilities for Schools and for the OSA.
- 5.2 The following staff/offices should provide a statement of their own objectives and action plans against these guiding principles and institutional objectives:
 - Accommodation
 - Admissions and clearing
 - Educational Development Unit
 - FM
 - International Office
 - ILS
 - Marketing
 - Partnership Division
 - Recruitment
 - Students' unions

These statements will be collated and made available to all staff in a revision of the Staff Guidelines to enable cross-institutional collaboration.

- 5.3 The Central Steering Group will meet bi-annually in December and April/May to review School reports and university-wide planning. The formal evaluative Autumn reporting from Schools,

initiated in 2010, will be complemented by completion of a brief Spring Action Plan, providing two key touch points between Schools and the Central Steering Group in November and at the end of March to allow for raising and resolving of key issues, with most students arriving at points in January, May, end of August and September. See Appendix C for a checklist for School Action Plans in March.

5.4 Planning cycle for evaluation and planning: (see Appendix D for key dates and deadlines for planning, collation of these still in progress)



Agreed by Academic Council on 24th March 2011

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A. Specialist roles and responsibilities (new, March 2011)

A.1 Schools. Key staff and objectives:

Schools have the primary responsibility in delivery of the new students' entitlement, ensuring that this is an integrated process including central services; Schools should ensure a coordinating structure which is appropriately resourced, however it is configured within each School.

Objectives for Schools

- i. Identifying key staff/teams/roles to ensure coordination within and across the School and between Schools as necessary for combined studies students.
- ii. Plan, budget and deliver balanced and integrated programmes of activity for the first week/days for all new students, to deliver the students' entitlement as outcome
- iii. Identifying the needs of particular cohorts (page 3, 4.3) and ensure these are built into School and programme planning and provision
- iv. Early allocation of personal tutors and timetabling of tutorials as early as possible and on an ongoing basis
- v. Establish a cycle of early planning, evaluation and reporting, identifying mechanisms and staff responsibilities
- vi. Ensure timely communication of pre-arrival information to students, aiming at engagement as soon as possible after Acceptance, and collaborating cross-institutionally, in particular with Admissions and Clearing, Recruitment and Marketing and web teams
- vii. Embed introductions by OSA and ILS their services from the first week onwards
- viii. Liaise with Students' Unions to encourage and promote student representation and social activities and encourage SU to engage with School/programme activities.
- ix. Identify and develop on-going transitional activities and support throughout the first year, including referral and support for students with particular needs

A.2 OSA. Key staff and objectives:

The Office of Student Affairs is a support office to both students and staff and as such is important during a student's arrival and introduction to the University, under the leadership of the 3 Campus Heads. The Office of Student Affairs, through the Student Centres based on each campus and the web, provides access to information and guidance.

Objectives for the OSA

- i. Provide information on the New Arrivals web page and the portal tab for new students
- ii. Contact all students who have declared a disability prior to the student attending university to identify the support required and plan the provision of said support

- iii. Provide support for students completing part 1 registration via the Online registration call centre
- iv. Provide a welcome to new students completing Part 2 registration in face to face at the Student Centre on the Campus at which the student is studying
- v. Provide training and briefings for academic (and other staff) on registration processes
- vi. Provide introductory sessions during the first and/or following weeks which outline the services offered by the University via the Student Centres
- vii. Encourage and support collaboration across campuses
- viii. International students orientation provision

B New Students' entitlement

B.1 New Students' entitlement before and on arrival (revised, March 2011)

ESSENTIAL:

Before arrival

- Active communication of clear, accessible and accurate pre-arrival information specifying, as a minimum, start dates, times, locations and activities for the first week and contact information for the School and programme team.

Before and/or on arrival

- Welcome to the University, School and Department – Welcome letters/emails, meetings in the first week including the Head of School and/or Department Head - *important for giving a sense of occasion, a sense of identity, and raising expectations*
- Completion of Registration for those who need it
- Discussion of the first week's activities – activities & aims
- Introduction to staff and provision of staff contact information
- Introductions to programme/courses - *for example, through course booklets and/or reading lists; dealing with choices if applicable*
- Confirmation/clarification of student's teaching timetable
 - Thinking about "*What it means to be a Student*"
 - Dialogue about adjusting to Higher Education, what is required – independence and study
 - Dialogue about what students might/can expect, what might be a 'good experience' for students
 - Dialogue about students' rights and responsibilities
- Diagnostic testing as appropriate
- Identify provision for late arrivals
- Direct Entrants should be included in the first week's activities.

On arrival in the first week, and ongoing

- First meeting with personal tutor (group and/or individual) and setting appointments / timetable for ongoing tutorials. *Emphasis on tutors availability and involvement all week and not only in timetabled meetings.*
- The student to meet all staff who will teach them in the first term.
- Opportunities to socialise with staff and with continuing students
- Academic activities – combining socialisation with academic / discipline engagement and encouraging student activity.
- Prioritize initial, short introduction to Learning and Central Student Services by focussing on students' most immediate needs. *Emphasis on initial, short: there is a need for on-going induction and orientation during the term (see guideline 2 below).*
- Orientation – around the campus and related to resources: locations of teaching rooms and learning and other resources, including Student Centres, cafes, Students' Union : *in context of explanation of different roles eg. of School Offices cf. Student Centres, and identification of sources of support. Ensure there is clear signage and maps available.*

- Promoting opportunities for social and sporting activities, Student Societies and interaction between students at all levels including the Students Union.
- Introduction to any University procedures which students will need to grasp immediately, eg. course choices, submission of coursework if imminent. (see Guideline 3)

RECOMMENDED:

- Giving a sight of the end – *students can be inspired by seeing outcomes – eg. for Primary Education students meeting school children or graduate teachers; eg. through meeting Alumni.*
- Health and Safety briefings in the context of teaching and activities *through the first term* (not necessarily in the first week). Needs repeating at the start of formal teaching in different contexts and locations, all teaching staff need to take responsibility for this.
- Staff to wear name-badges. *Staff need to be available and friendly.*

B.2 Guidelines for School Planning for the first week

1. A sense of welcome is as important as information and orientation– both formal and more informal forms of welcome.
2. Avoid lengthy information sessions or students sitting in lecture theatres – aim for a varied and interactive timetable for the week built around bite-sized chunks, interspersing information with activity, giving information wherever possible in the context of activity, and allowing time between activities for questions, chatting, free time.
3. Work on the JEEJIT principle : Just Enough Education Just In Time
4. All School staff should be fully involved and available through the week
5. Ensure that activities and information are inclusive of all students; providing additional provision for certain cohorts as appropriate.
6. The designation “Induction and teaching” for the first week does not indicate or require the start of course teaching in a formal timetabled manner – this does not begin till the 2nd week (for September starters). “Teaching” in this context indicates academic activity, which might be delivered in a variety of ways to aim at establishing active rather than passive learning behaviours. Adapting or re-thinking current activities (as necessary) may be more productive than attempting to “add-on” formal teaching.
Existing examples in the University include: building bridges from newspaper and discussing functionality and engineering principles; producing a poster for a subject-related event; group work on a small discipline-related project; making short videos about new students’ experience. Early feedback on such activities can be a context for exploring feedback and assessment with students.
7. Schools should ensure staff are appropriately briefed and up to date on Registration, immigration, fees and on Student Services support so that students are given correct information or referred as necessary.
8. Liaise with the Students Unions to coordinate activities and promote and accommodate Students union events.
9. Replace references to Week 1 or “Induction” with “First week” (and/or “Term start [dates]”, “beginning of term”)

C. Checklist for Action Plans for March reporting (new, February 2012)

C.1 Schools

Checklist for Schools’ Action Plans for March reporting to Central Steering Group (CSG)

In the light of students' feedback in the September and January New Arrivals surveys please note key issues for your School and any changes being made or actions taken.

	Please briefly state progress in each of these areas:
Allocation of resources & responsibilities in Schools	
Departmental or other cross-School coordination, discussion & collaboration	
Timetabling / rooming	
Website	
Consultation with student committees / reps	
Co-planning with ILS, OSA, Students' Union for initial and on-going introductions	
Co-planning with Recruitment, Marketing, Admissions, Clearing, OSA, including pre-arrival information and registration administration	
School and programme handbooks	
Allocation of personal tutors – how are tutors allocated, how and when is information communicated to students	
Diagnostic testing	
Provision for cohorts with particular needs including late arrivals and direct entrants	
Continuation of transition activities/support through 1 st term	
Identification of any key problems/issues for CSG	
Planned innovations and enhancements	
Please note any issues you wish to be raised at New Arrivals and Transition Steering Group:	

C2. Offices

New Arrivals and Transition policy: Objectives and action plans for Offices/ Units

Name of Office/ Unit:	Date:
Please identify your Office/Unit's main areas of direct or indirect responsibility in relation to new students.	
Please identify any key staff in your Office with particular responsibility in relation to new arrivals and transition (by both role and name where possible).	
Please specify the primary objectives for your Office in implementation of the institutional objectives and delivery of new students' entitlement. (see attached)	
Please note any issues raised for your Office by students' responses in the New Arrivals Surveys in September and January.	
Please outline any specific action planning required for achievement of these objectives and in response to students' feedback.	

Please return this form to Norma Powell in OSA by the agreed deadline

D Key dates and deadlines (new, March 2011)

- i. Rooming:
School requests for/confirmation of rooming (based on previous year's bookings as default):
 - Rooms for the first week of term in Sept : deadline April 11th
 - Other additional / ad hoc requests : deadline the end of May
- ii. Admissions: Schools to liaise with Admissions about partner college students for Fast Tracking – deadline tbc
- iii. Joining instructions – *details to be sent by Schools to Peter Fisher*
 - for Sept starters : deadline tbc
 - Jan starters : deadline tbc
- iv. Registration
 - Avery Hill Schools : deadlines tbc
 - Greenwich Schools : deadlines tbc
 - Medway Schools – liaison with OSA (Lynne Spencer)
 - School requests for newly validated programme registration slots – deadline from January onwards, final deadline April
 - Confirmation of registration for existing programmes – deadline end of May for September starters
- v. Marketing - *requests to Marketing for new arrivals materials*
 - for Sept – deadline tbc
 - for Jan. – deadline tbc
- vi. School web pages - Schools to send Term Start information to Marketing
 - for Sept. – deadline tbc
 - for Jan. – deadline tbc
- vii. Central services & Students Union liaison
School requests to OSA, ILS & SU for introductions in first week
 - OSA – deadline tbc
 - Students unions – deadline tbc
 - ILS – deadline for arranging library tours etc. tbc
 - ILS – deadline for Schools to send reading lists tbc*Students Unions to provide SU events information to Schools – deadline tbc*
- viii. Reporting by Schools to Central Steering Group
 - Report on September starters – deadline end of November
 - Action plans – end of March

E Related Documentation

The final Policy will contain links to other relevant documentation such as:

2009 Policy Framework

2010 Paper and recommendations endorsed by Academic Council

2011 New Arrivals and Transition: consultation paper on progress and policy endorsed by Learning & Quality

2010 Staff Guidelines for New Arrivals (to be revised, 2011)

Pro forma for School reporting (revised, March 2011)

Template for School Reporting on New Arrivals activities, the first week

Please outline briefly :

What changes (if any) have been made to first week activities in your School this year?

How, and by whom, are the first week's activities planned and coordinated? (please include details of any cross-institutional collaboration)

What resources are allocated to the first week (e.g. staff workload allocation; New Arrivals budget, etc)?

	Reporting against new students' entitlement <i>(Please attach student documentation where possible so we can collate examples of effective practice)</i>	Please indicate if this takes place or not, by programme, if there is variation.	Please describe briefly how/when this takes place	Please comment on the success and perceived value of this element
<i>Before arrival</i>	Active communication of clear, accessible and accurate pre-arrival information specifying, as a minimum, start dates, times and locations for arrival activities and contact information for the School. Briefing of School staff to ensure correct information and referring for students in relation to Registration, immigration, fees and Student Services support			
<i>Before and/or on arrival</i>	Welcome to the University, School and Department – including the Head of School and/or Department Head Completion of Registration for those who need it Discussion of the first week – activities & aims Introduction to staff and provision of staff contact information. Introductions to programme/courses Confirmation/clarification of student's teaching timetable Thinking about "What it means to be a Student" Dialogue about adjusting to Higher Education, what is required –			

	independence and study
	Dialogue about what students might/can expect, what might be a 'good experience' for students
	Dialogue about students' rights and responsibilities
	Diagnostic testing as appropriate
	Provision for late arrivals
	Inclusion of Direct Entrants in first week's activities
<i>On arrival in the first week and ongoing</i>	First meeting with personal tutor (group and/or individual) and setting appointments / timetable for ongoing tutorials
	Tutors are available and involved all week
	Students meet all staff who will teach them in the first term
	Opportunities to socialise with staff and with continuing students
	Academic activities – combining socialisation with academic / discipline engagement and encouraging student activity
	Initial, short introduction to Learning and Student Services
	Orientation – around the campus and related to resources (eg. locations of teaching rooms and learning and other resources)
	Opportunities for social/sporting activities, Student Societies, interaction between students at all levels including Students' Unions.
	Introduction to any University procedures which students will need to grasp immediately, eg. course choices, submission of coursework if imminent.
	Liaise with the Students Union to coordinate activities and promote and accommodate Students union events
	On-going transitional support through the first term (at least)

Concluding reflections:

With specific reference to the recent changes to new arrivals provision and to student feedback via the University survey (and any other forms of evaluation), we would value some concluding reflections on the ways in which your School welcomes new students and supports them at this key transitional stage. It would be helpful if you can identify areas and measures of particular strength and success, action points for further development and changes next year, including outcomes of consultation with students. We would also welcome feedback on the materials and events provided centrally, as well as an indication of any other ways in which the Educational Development Unit may be able to support this process.

Please attach one or more typical first week programmes from your School.